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ABSTRACT

Writing needs to be given adequate emphasis in the area of social studies. Teachers should attempt to be creative and to assign different kinds of writing in their classes. This paper discusses possible activities for students in a unit on the Middle East to illustrate diverse purposes in writing. An initial assignment could be to ask students to outline material in a text. Pupils also might be asked to write summaries of content reading. Students might be assigned to write scripts for historical events or even to create illustrations of certain events. It can also be educational to have students build scale models of historical sites, such as the walled city of Jericho. Asking students to write creatively, including poems and fictitious diary entries, concerning an historical event should be considered. For historical controversies, students might summarize pros and cons, as in the case of the 1947 Security Council resolution to divide Palestine into an Arab and a Jewish state. Involving students with creating maps or working in committees to write logs for various factions represented in historical disputes also are methods that prove effective. In short, social studies teachers should guide each student to achieve optionally in writing. (HB)

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# WRITING IN SOCIAL STUDIES

Writing, the second of the three R's, needs adequate emphasis in the social studies. There are diverse purposes which the social studies teacher may emphasize in correlating writing with the social studies. Which writing experiences might the teacher emphasize?

The writer will discuss activities for students in a unit on the Middle East to illustrate diverse purposes in writing.

1. Pupils may be encouraged to outline content read from the basal textbook, single or multiple series. The outline must have proper form, including the title, main divisions, subdivisions, and details. In reading events leading to the Middle East crisis, students may record the following:

I. The MacMahon-Hussein correspondence of 1915.

A. The Arabs were promised their independence in Palestine by Great Britain if they would support British war efforts during World War I.

1. Lawrence of Arabia, citizen of England, sabotaged Ottoman Turkish Empire efforts in what is now Saudi Arabia during WWI. The Ottoman Empire sided in with the Central Powers during WWI.

2. Sharif Hussein, great grandfather of King Hussein of the Hashemite Kingdom of the Jordan, was keeper of the Moslem holy places during World War I in what is now Saudi Arabia.

(a) These places were Mecca, birthplace of Mohammed, and Medina, place of his entombment.

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(b) Sharif Hussein was to become the leader of the Arab revolt in Saudi Arabia against the Ottoman Turkish Empire.

2. Pupils may write summaries covering content read. After reading about the Balfour Declaration (1917), a committee of learners may write the following:

The Balfour Declaration was issued by Great Britain in 1917. The Declaration provided a homeland for Jews in Palestine. Jews from different nations could then migrate to Palestine. But, nothing was to be done which would hinder the native population living in Palestine. The native population was largely comprised of Arabs.

3. Students may write a script for each illustration drawn on a movie set. Here, learners might draw illustrations of different scenes of the old city of Jerusalem with related content for each picture. The illustrations and related script could include

(a) the wall around the old city of Jerusalem as a picture drawn. The script may include the date of the building of the wall (1542 when the Ottoman Turks governed the land of Palestine).

(b) the Dome of the Rock as an illustration drawn by pupils. The script could include the year of its completion (691 A.D.). This mosque is octagonal in shape and is a holy site to devout Moslems. Jerusalem, (Mecca and Medina are the holiest cities), is the third holiest city in the Moslem world.

(c) the Western Wall, also called the Wailing Wall, located directly west of the Dome of the Rock. The Western Wall is the only remnant, according to beliefs of devout Jews, of the ancient Jewish temple.

(d) the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, located inside the west side of the wall around old Jerusalem. This church, according to devout Christians, locates the place where Christ was crucified and entombed.

4. One of the oldest continuously inhabited cities on the face of the earth is Jericho, located eighteen miles east of the walled city of Jerusalem. Jericho is located 700 feet below sea level, whereas Jerusalem is 2,500 feet above sea level. Jericho would be a desert were it not for irrigation systems. This city receives less than eight inches of rain per year. With irrigated land, Jericho is an oasis containing citrus fruit trees, banana groves, date palms, and vegetables.

Students may make a model of Jericho showing the houses, stores, and garden crops grown. Selected students may wish to read about and write a summary of the work of archeologists who have studied the old city of Jericho. Selected archeologists believe that Jericho is the oldest continuously inhabited city on the planet earth. The completed model and the written report on excavations of Jericho should be shared with other class members.

5. South of the walled city of Jerusalem, a distance of six miles, is Bethlehem. Bethlehem was significant to the Crusaders since they believed the Birth of Christ had occurred in this city. In Bethlehem is the Church of Nativity. This church contains a grotto with a fourteen point star indicating the spot where the birth was to have taken place. Students with teacher guidance may locate, discover, and write answers as to why the Crusaders wanted the Holy Land. Answers or hypotheses may be tested with further study using a variety of materials, such as multiple series textbooks, audio-visual materials, encyclopedias, and other reference materials. Revisions in the answers/hypotheses may then be made, if needed.

6. Hebron, located thirteen miles south of Bethlehem, houses the Mosque of Abraham. The patriarch Abraham was the forefather of both Arabs and Jews. The Arabs claim their descent through Ishmael and the Jews through Isaac. Both Ishmael and Isaac were sons of Abraham.

In the Mosque of Abraham are the tombs of Abraham and Sarah, Isaac and Rebecca, as well Jacob and Leah.

After adequate background information has been obtained by students, each learner may write a poem covering main ideas. Students may select the title and kind of verse to write. Thus, free verse, haikus, tankas, quatrains, limericks, diamantes, and septolets may be written pertaining to the Mosque of Abraham.

7. North of Jerusalem is the city of Nablus (ancient Samaria). Nablus is forty kilometers north of Jerusalem. There are approximately 400 Samaritans left on the face of the earth. Samaritans are descendents of a union of the ancient Assyrians and Jews. In 722 B.C., the Assyrians captured the northern kingdom of Israel of which Samaria was the capitol. Jews who remained in ancient Samaria and were not transplanted to another region or nation intermarried with the Assyrians.

A Samaritan temple is located on Mount Gerizim in Nablus. The Samaritans do not marry outsiders to their race and faith.

With adequate readiness, students may write diary entries pertaining to the life and times of the Samaritans. Adequate research and knowledge are necessary to write the diary entries. The diary entries may be shared with other learners in the classroom.

8. A study of the 1947 United Nations resolution to divide the land of Palestine into a Palestinian Arab and a Jewish state may be made. The Arabs opposed and the Jews favored the plan. Israel then declared statehood in 1948. In that year a series of four wars were fought, leaving over one million Palestinian refugees in camps throughout the Hashemite Kingdom of the Jordan, Syria, and Lebanon. The West Bank of Palestine became a part of the Hashemite Kingdom of the Jordan.

Students may summarize the pros and cons of the 1947 Security Council resolution. Content, as well as the mechanics of writing, should be emphasized in the written report.

9. In 1967, Israel captured the West Bank from the Hashemite Kingdom of the Jordan. The West Bank has approximately 1.1 million Palestinians. Israel also captured the Sinai peninsula and the Gaza strip from Egypt, as well as the Golan Heights from Syria. About 100 Jewish settlements have been built on the West Bank since 1967. The Palestinians fear losing the rest of the land of Palestine.

Students may draw a map of Palestine as it was prior to 1948, from 1948-1967, and 1967 to present. Israel and Egypt signed a peace treaty in 1978 in which the former returned the Sinai to Egypt. The map drawn of the Middle East should show the Sinai peninsula prior to 1978 and after the peace treaty was signed. Learners may also debate and record their findings on why changes occur in the Middle East area of the world.

10. In June 1982, Israel invaded Lebanon. Israel sought to drive the Palestinians out of Lebanon. Lebanon had experienced a civil war since 1975. There are many factions (separate groups) in Lebanon. These factions include the following: Israel, the Palestinians, the Shiites with Nabih Berry as leader, the Druze with Walid Jumblatt as leader, the Maronites with Amin Gemeyal being one leader and Sulieman

Franjieh as a leader of the opposite faction of the Maronite Christians, and the Sunni Moslems.

Many atrocities occurred during the Lebanese war, including the massacre of approximately 800 Palestinian refugees in Sabra and Chatila camps in Lebanon.

Students may study and in committees write logs on each faction represented in the Lebanese dispute.

## In Summary

There are a variety of written experiences for students to engage in. These include writing outlines, summaries, script for a movie set, reports, hypotheses, poetry, diary entries, and logs. The social studies teacher needs to guide each student to achieve optimally in writing.